

Welcome to the first addition of the Chifley Update for 2009.

Through this publication supporters of the Chifley Research Centre will be able to keep up-to-date with the latest progressive research from Australia and the rest of the world as well as accessing research from academics, research institutes and the CRC itself.

The CRC is Labor's national research centre. As a progressive think-tank, the CRC engages in policy research and public debate. We promote discussion and cooperation with progressive think-tanks and academics and aim to advance progressive thinking and policy goals through our work.

Visit [www.chifley.org.au](http://www.chifley.org.au) for more about the Chifley Research Centre.

## NEW CHIFLEY WEBSITE

We have just launched our freshly updated website [www.chifley.org.au](http://www.chifley.org.au) that includes a new look for the centre and also expands our ability to provide you with the most up-to-date progressive policy thinking that is going on in Australia and around the world.

From [chifley.org.au](http://chifley.org.au) you will be able to explore the events that we have held, read the interesting policy research that we have undertaken and keep abreast of the wide range of progressive policy innovation that is coming from other research institutes.

We aim to expand the material that is provided on our site, so please keep a look out for more dynamic content such as video interviews and panel discussions and our upcoming series of papers from prominent ALP Members of Parliament.

## Getting the balance right for families

Mark Butler the Federal Labor MP for Port Adelaide has written the first article of our upcoming series of MP Think-Pieces. Entitled *Getting the Balance Right: The Rudd Government's Agenda for Work and Family*, Mark outlines the impacts of the former Liberal government's regressive and out-dated policies concerning work and families and contrasts this with the agenda of the Rudd Labor Government.

Building from the latest edition of the Australian Work and Life Index, produced by the University of South Australia, Mark discusses the moral imperative that governments have in shaping the industrial relations system to mitigate any imbalances that are occurring between a family's work and leisure time. For Mark, the one important thing a government can do in addressing these issues "is to give Australians a greater sense of control of their own lives in order to deal with those choices" between work and family time.

This series of MP Think-Pieces provides our readers and policy leaders with an



■ Member for Port Adelaide, Mark Butler

opportunity to engage in the ideas debate around solutions to the challenges that we face as a nation and make a contribution to progressive thought in Australia.

Visit [www.chifley.org.au](http://www.chifley.org.au) to view article's from the Think-Piece series including Mark's.

## Time banks cashing in on social capital

Lucie Stephens and Josh Ryan-Collins of the New Economics Foundation in the United Kingdom have released a paper on the potential benefits of time banking. A time bank is an organisation that links people who share their time in order to improve the lives of the members of the bank. The time bank works on a reciprocal system where each hour a person can give is equal to one credit and these credits can be exchanged in order to get some help from other bank members (e.g. a person can exchange their credits, gained by doing childcare, for obtaining language lessons).

Stephens and Collins believe such banks have enormous potential in changing the ways we perceive social and welfare services. By implementing an exchange system, people are encouraged to share the skills that they have with other members of the community regardless of their socio-economic situation. This in turn, the authors argue, builds confidence in people who would otherwise be sandwiched between a welfare system-based on dependency and an economic system that is notoriously ambivalent towards people in precarious situations.

Visit [www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org) for details about time banks and their uses in the UK.

# Government SuperClinics a breath of fresh air in health service delivery

In *What Hippocrates can learn from Epicurus*, Jennifer Doggett discusses the Rudd Labor government's policy to open a number of SuperClinics which would revolutionise the delivery of primary health care in the community. By utilising the analogy of a restaurant, Doggett is able to show the inconsistencies that exist in delivering front line health services.

For Doggett it is just as illogical for a patient to have to go to different places to get a doctor's appointment and a blood test as it would be to have to go to one place to dine and another to drink. This is why it is essential that the government implements

these new clinics to bring many primary health services under one roof. Just as importantly for Doggett, the government needs to get it right and to ensure that the health sector is brought along for the ride. SuperClinics, according to Doggett, offer a "fundamentally different way of providing primary care, and changing anything in the health system takes time". She believes that it is important that doctors recognise the benefits that the SuperClinics will deliver and support their implementation.

Visit <http://inside.org.au/what-hippocrates-can-learn/> for details.



## Within our reach: sustainable affordable housing

Seeking to build on the environmental agenda of the recently elected Obama administration David Ambromowitz of the Centre for American Progress has published a plan to make America's public housing "green and affordable".

Ambromowitz's plan entails investing in retrofitting of the 4.75 million pre-existing federally-funded rental units which, he believes, would lead to a number of positive economic and environmental outcomes. These outcomes include achieving an increase in energy efficiency by between 25 and 40 per cent per unit which would substantially reduce the approximately \$US5 billion spent each year by the federal government on energy costs. Ambromowitz also states that such a project would lead to the creation of a "green renovation industry" which would provide new employment opportunities and, if well targeted, the potential for creating new path ways for disadvantaged groups into meaningful employment.

Ambromowitz sees his plan an example of the new thinking required to meet the twin challenges of economic instability and environmental change whilst maintaining the progressive values that are the basis for public and affordable housing.

Visit [www.americanprogress.org](http://www.americanprogress.org) for details of the article.

For links to articles  
discussed in the  
*Chifley Update* and  
many other useful  
publications visit  
the Chifley Research  
Centre website

[www.chifley.org.au](http://www.chifley.org.au)

## IN BRIEF

■ Independent think tank Per Capita recently released a paper on Social Innovation exploring the benefits of redesigning the employment services market.  
[www.percapita.org.au](http://www.percapita.org.au)

■ The Centre for Cultural Research at the University of Western Sydney recently released a report examining the health interactions between families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and health professionals.  
[www.uws.edu.au/centre\\_for\\_cultural\\_research](http://www.uws.edu.au/centre_for_cultural_research)

■ IPPR in the United Kingdom conducted a panel discussion entitled 'The Social and Political Implications of the Recession'. The discussion featured former Chifley guest Jon Cruddas MP.  
[www.ippr.org.uk/thinkingfortomorrow](http://www.ippr.org.uk/thinkingfortomorrow)

■ The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released a study exploring the sustainability and viability of the publicly-funded Canadian health system.  
[www.policyalternatives.ca](http://www.policyalternatives.ca)

■ Former Clinton Chief of Staff John Podesta spoke about the role of progressives in shaping the response to the great challenges facing the economy, health care, education and climate change.  
[www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/10/aspen\\_video.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/10/aspen_video.html)